

Message Text

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EXDIS

PASS PRIORITY TO US DELEGATION IAEA SALZBURG FUEL CYCLE CONFERENCE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG PFOR
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION PROGRAM

REF: STATE 091828

1. ON APRL 27, IN CALL ON AMBASSADOR PAULO CABRAL DE MELLO, ECON-COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR PRESENTED US NON-PAPER INTERNATIONAL FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION PROGRAM, PURSUANT TO REFTEL. CABRAL DE MELLO SAID IT WOULD PROMPTLY BE MADE AVAILABLE TO BRAZILIAN DELEGATION TO IAEA'S SALZBURG MEETING.

2. CABRAL DE MELLO ASKED ABOUT THE INTENDED MEANING OF THE PHRASE ".....POSSIBLE FUTURE INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS TO REDUCE PROLIFERATION RISK, ASSOCIATED WITH ABROGATION OR TERMINATION OF SAFEGUARDS" (SECTION III (B)(3) SECOND ITEM). COUNSELOR NOTED THE CONTINGENCY OF A COUNTRY ABROGATING IAEA SAFEGUARDS, AS AN ACT OF SOVEREIGNTY, UNDER EXTREME CIRCUM-
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STANCES. CABRAL DE MELLO DID NOT THINK SUCH A CONTINGENCY VERY PLAUSIBLE. HE SAID THAT THE SCENARIO, HOWEVER, ONCE AGAIN POINTED UP THE DISCRIMINATORY NATURE OF THE NPT; NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATES, LIKE THE US AND THE UK WERE NOT REQUIRED TO MAINTAIN THEIR FACILITIES UNDER IAEA SAFEGUARDS; THUS THE QUESTION

OF POSSIBLE ABROGATION IF IAEA SAFEGUARDS DID NOT EVEN ARISE. COUNSELOR NOTED THAT IN REGARD TO THE US THIS SITUATION SEEMED TO BE CHANGING INASMUCH AS PRESIDENT FORDS' OCTOBER 28 STATEMENT VISUALIZED BRINGING US CIVILIAN FACILITIES UNDER IAEA SAFEGUARDS. CABRAL DE MELLO ALLOWED THAT THIS MIGHT BE SO FAR FOR THE US BUT THIS STILL LEFT COUNTRIES LIKE FRANCE.

3. CABRAL DE MELLO THEN NOTED THE SECTION ON REPROCESSING (SECTION III(A)(3)), PARTICULARLY THE THIRD ITEM ON TECHNICAL ALTERNATIVES TO REPROCESSING, AND THE US OFFER TO SHARE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES THE FINDINGS OF ITS EXTENSIVELY RECENT WORK ON THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS OF REPROCESSING (FIRST ITEM, SECOND SENTENCE); AND THE SECTION ON ORGANIZATION (SECTION II), PARTICULARLY THE PROPOSAL THAT EFFORTS IN EACH MAJOR AREA START AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH INTERESTED COUNTRIES, AND THAT COUNTRIES INTERESTED IN RESEARCH AND EVALUATION IN A PARTICULAR AREA WOULD WORK TOGETHER ON BILATERAL BASIS. TAKING THESE STATEMENTS TOGETHER, CABRAL DE MELLO ASKED, DID THIS MEAN THAT THE US WOULD, FOR EXAMPLE, BE PREPARED TO SHARE CO- PROCESSING AND SIMILAR REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY WITH BRAZIL AND OTHER NON-NUCLEAR LDCS.

4. IN HIS REPLY, E/C COUNSELOR NOTED THAT :

(A) THE REFERENCE IN THE SECTION ON ORGANIZATION REFERRED TO "RESEARCH" NOT APPLICATION; (B) PRESIDENT CARTER HAD STOPPED THE APPLICATION OF REPROCESSING IN THE US AND THE US, THEREFORE, COULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN ACTUAL CONFIDENTIAL

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APPLICATION OF REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY; (C) THE POSSIBLE APPLICATION OF NEW PROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES WHICH WOULD AVOID THE SEPARATION OF PLUTONIUM, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH USE OF SUCH REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES WOULD ACTUALLY REDUCE PROLIFERATION RISKS, WAS ONE OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE STUDIED UNDER THE PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAM; (D) THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THE SECTION ON ORGANIZATION SPECIFICALLY DELIMITS THE NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WE BELIEVE SHOULD BE BROUGHT INTO THE FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION PROGRAM AT THIS TIME. COUNSELOR SAID THESE OBSERVATIONS WERE IN THE NATURE OF PRELIMINARY REACTIONS TO CABRAL DE MELLO'S QUESTIONS.

5. COMMENT: CABRAL DE MELLO IS TOO CIRCUMSPECT AND CAREFUL AN OFFICIAL TO ENGAGE IN IDLE SPECULATION IN SENSITIVE AREAS. IN DEALING WITH HIM FOR SOME TWO YEARS, WE HAVE FOUND THAT HIS QUESTIONS AND SPECULATIONS ALMOST ALWAYS SERVE A PURPOSE. IT MAY BE,

THEREFORE, OF SOME INTEREST THAT HE LANUCHED INTO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS DESIGNED TO ELICIT A US RESPONSE OR COMMITMENT ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE US WOULD TRANSFER NEW LESS PROLIFERATION-PRONE REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES. TAKEN TOGETHER WITH THE FRG'S RECENT EXPORT LICENSING DECISIONS AND WITH THE STANDARD BRAZILIAN ARGUMENT ON THE NPT'S ALLEGED DOUBLE STANDARD, HOWEVER, HIS PURPOSE MAY HAVE BEEN NO MORE THAN TACTICAL, I.E., TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE WOULD NOT REALLY BE WILLING TO TRANSFERLESS PRO-LIFERATION-SENSITIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR APPLICATION IN LDC'S.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: CABRAL DE MELLO'S QUESTIONS MIGHTS BE AN INTERESTING TRACK TO PURSUE. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENTS'S GUIDANCE ON WHETHER TO PURSUE THE REPROCESSING ANGLE AT THIS POINT AND, IF SO, HOW TO RESPOND TO CABRAL DE MELLO'S QUESTIONS IN A MORE DEFINITIVE MANNER. WE OF COURSE RECONIZE CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT DISCUSSIONS WITH NOGUEIRA BATISTA IN SALZBURG WOULD BE REVELANT TO WHETHER CABRAL'S LINE OF QUESTIONING IS WORTH TAKING UP AT THIS TIME. CRIMMINS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED TO ABOVE ADDRESSEE.

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